

**ADULT PROTECTIVE
SERVICES
MINIMUM TRAINING
STANDARDS**

**Presented to the Virginia State Board of
Social Services**

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INTRODUCTION

The *Code of Virginia*, § 63.1-55.02, requires that the Department of Social Services (Department) establish, and the State Board of Social Services approve, by September 15, 2001, minimum training standards for Adult Protective Services (APS) workers in the Commonwealth. The Code was amended pursuant to the enrollment of two bills with similar language, Senate Bill 827 and House Bill 1717 (see Appendix A for copies of the enrolled bills). The *Code* requires that all APS workers in local departments of social services (local departments) complete the required training within one year from the date of implementation of the minimum training standards or within the first year of their employment. Continuing education after the first year of training is also required as a part of the minimum training standards plan. The implementation date of the required minimum training is January 1, 2002.

A work group was convened after the General Assembly Session to make recommendations about how the training requirement should be met. A list of the individuals who participated on this work group is found in Appendix B.

For purposes of this document, an APS worker (meaning both an APS worker and an APS supervisor) is employed by a local department of social services and conducts APS investigations and/or provides ongoing services to APS cases.

WHO MUST ATTEND TRAINING?

Within one year from the date of implementation (January 1, 2002) of the minimum training standards, or within the first year of employment, all APS workers and APS supervisors shall complete the four core courses and any additional training recommended by the APS supervisor or person managing the APS program in the local department of social services. Some APS workers may be exempt from taking certain courses; please see the "Special Circumstances" section for further information.

Intake and on-call Child Protective Services (CPS) workers who do not perform APS investigations must take a one-day APS training.

CORE COURSES

1. *Adult Services/Adult Protective Services New Worker Policy Training* (3 days)

This course teaches the provisions of Adult Services (AS) and APS as prescribed in the *Code of Virginia*; the Department's policy and procedures for receiving and investigating reports of suspected abuse, neglect, or exploitation of adults; investigative methods for determining if protective services are needed; and provision of protective services when the investigation finds a need for such services. This three-day session incorporates training on the Virginia Uniform Assessment

Instrument (UAI). The *Code of Virginia*, § 63.1-173.3, requires the use of a uniform assessment instrument for assessment of applicants to and residents of assisted living facilities. The UAI is also used for nursing home preadmission screenings, assessments for home-based care, and other publicly funded long-term care services.

2. *Assessing Capacity* (2 days)

This course addresses the knowledge and skills needed in order to assess the capacity of adults. A Risk/Capacity Model is taught. The ability to assess capacity is essential for determining if an adult lacks capacity and whether the court will be asked to order involuntary protective services in an emergency.

3. *APS Facility Investigations* (2 days)

This course focuses on investigation skills and techniques unique to the complexity of APS investigations in facilities. The course includes instruction on the investigation process; indicators and evidence of abuse, neglect, and exploitation; and how to use a medical chart in an investigation.

4. *Substance/Medication Abuse and the Elderly/Disabled* (2 days)

This course provides training on alcohol abuse and medication mismanagement that are common among the elderly and persons with disabilities. Risk factors, barriers to detection, consequences to elderly and disabled adults, family dynamics, and guidelines for intervention are some of the topics considered. The course also addresses medication, alcohol, and food interaction and examines the uses of chemical restraints.

Additional First-Year Training Requirements

After the four core courses have been completed, additional training in the first year is required ONLY if a local department of social services assessment determines that an APS worker needs additional training. The APS worker and his/her supervisor or person managing the APS program at the local department should conduct an assessment of additional training needs. If the worker and supervisor or person managing the APS program identify the need for additional courses during the first year, the APS worker must complete the needed courses.

New courses may be substituted for the four core courses as local APS workers' needs change. The Adult Services Program Manager, in consultation with central, regional, and local Adult Services Program staff, will determine when changes are needed.

COURSE INSTRUCTORS

The AS/APS New Worker Policy Training course is offered by the Department and is trained periodically by Adult Services Regional Program Consultants. The remainder of the courses are taught by social services practitioners, many of whom are professionals in the local departments of social services.

SPECIAL TRAINING CIRCUMSTANCES

1. AS/APS New Worker Policy Training Course Completed Since 1993

If it can be documented that an APS worker has completed the AS/APS new worker policy training since 1993, the APS worker will have met the minimum training requirements for the AS/APS new worker policy training. A request for documentation of attendance at the AS/APS new worker policy training should be submitted to the appropriate Adult Services Regional Program Consultant. Each Adult Services Regional Program Consultant will have a listing of those persons who have attended the AS/APS new worker policy training since 1993. If the worker's name appears on the roster and a request is made, a letter will be issued documenting that the training has been completed. No credit will be provided for AS/APS new worker policy training taken before 1993.

2. One-Day APS Refresher Course

A one-day intensive course will be offered to meet the needs of APS workers that took the standardized AS/APS New Worker Policy Training before 1993. This course is only for those APS workers who took the three-day AS/APS New Worker Policy Training course prior to 1993. The Adult Services Regional Program Consultants will train the refresher course statewide during the first year of implementation of the APS minimum training standards. This one-day refresher course will substitute for the three-day AS/APS New Worker Policy training.

3. One-Day APS Training for Intake and On-Call CPS Workers

CPS workers and others who are responsible for APS on-call or APS intake activities, but do not conduct investigations, may take a one-day intensive course on the "Fundamentals of Adult Protective Services" in lieu of the full curriculum of required APS courses. No additional APS courses are required for staff who do not conduct APS investigations. The Adult Services Regional Program Consultant will train this course.

4. Core Courses Completed Prior to Implementation of Minimum Training Requirements

Any of the other three required core courses that were completed by an APS worker prior to January 1, 2002, will count towards fulfilling the minimum training standards.

Documentation of completed courses is available through the Area Training Center (ATC) that offered the training. The APS worker should obtain and provide the required documentation of completion of mandated courses to his/her immediate supervisor or the person managing the APS program at the local department of social services.

5. Exemption from Required Courses

Experienced APS workers who, at the time of the implementation of the APS minimum training standards, have developed, trained, or are certified to train one of the core courses may request that they be exempt from the requirements to take the course that they developed or train or are certified to train. A copy of the contract to develop or train the course or proof of certification will serve as documentation. Documentation shall be provided to the APS worker's immediate supervisor and shall be maintained in the APS worker's personnel record in the local department of social services in which he or she is employed. Persons employed in or assigned to APS after January 1, 2002, will not be eligible for the exemption described in this section.

OVERSIGHT OF COURSE COMPLETION

The Department will document and track completion of courses by APS social workers and Child Protective Services (CPS) on-call workers. A database has been established to collect the following data for the New Worker Policy Training:

- First, Middle, and Last Name
- Social Security Number
- Training Date
- FIPS Code
- The Local Department of Social Services
- Training Location
- Instructors

Data will also be gathered on whether the worker has already taken the three additional core courses. See Appendix C for a sample printout of the data-collection screen.

From this database, a training roster can be generated (see Appendix D for sample roster) that will identify which courses the worker has already taken and which ones he or she needs to take to meet the minimum training requirements. The data can be sorted in a variety of ways for any reports that might be necessary for the management of the tracking of courses taken. Another way in which these data may be used is to identify how many workers need each course so that sufficient number of course offerings may be planned.

CONTINUING EDUCATION REQUIREMENTS

After completion of the core minimum training standards courses, APS workers shall continue professional development through a minimum of 20 hours of professional continuing education activities annually in the fields of APS, aging, and long-term care. Continuing education activities to be credited toward the 20 hours should be pre-approved by the local department of social services' APS supervisor or manager. Continuing education activities may include organized learning activities from accredited university or college academic courses, continuing education programs, workshops, seminars, and conferences.

Documentation of continuing education activities is the responsibility of the local department of social services. All workers should note that, after April 25, 2003, licensed social workers and licensed clinical social workers shall be required (18 VAC 140-20-105) to have completed a minimum of 30 hours of continuing education for each biennial licensure renewal.

The Department encourages the professional development of APS workers. The following courses are recommended to be taken during their employment with the local department of social services:

- **Introduction to Adult Services/Adult Protective Services (2 days)**
This course covers the core functions of adult services and APS workers, including assessment and service planning. It discusses program philosophy and legal mandates as well as key skills.
- **Casework Process and Planning (3 days)**
This course assists workers in planning the casework process.
- **Adult Development and the Aging Process (3 days)**
This course addresses the stages and processes of normal adult development, including the social and emotional impact of aging and disabilities on the adult and family. Workers will learn to identify normal physiological and mental functioning changes associated with aging, nutritional issues, medication issues, and symptoms of mental illness and physical illness. The course also addresses the effects of and issues related to institutionalization of mentally ill, mentally retarded, substance abusing, disabled, and elderly adults and their families.
- **Uniform Assessment Instrument (UAI) (2 days)**
The primary purpose for this course is to provide workers with the skills and techniques necessary for implementation of the Virginia Uniform Assessment Instrument (UAI) in field or office settings. This course is for health and human resources agencies authorized to complete the UAI for public pay clients.

- **Investigating Adult Sexual Abuse** (3 days)

This course is designed to help workers to determine when an adult has been sexually abused and to respond with sensitivity, professionalism, and in compliance with Commonwealth of Virginia mandates. The course also discusses worker attitudes towards consenting adult sexuality.

- **Substitute Decision-Making** (3 days)

This course addresses when the agency has the responsibility to initiate the appointment of a substitute decision-maker for an adult and what is meant by substitute decision-making. Definitions of terms, options along the continuum of substitute decision-making, the responsibilities, limitations, advantages, and disadvantages of each option is covered.

- **Investigating Financial Exploitation** (3 days)

This course is co-trained by a social services practitioner and a law-enforcement officer. The training focuses on defining financial exploitation, discussing behaviors that constitute exploitation, and identifying indicators that an adult may be at risk. Methods of accessing public and private documents and of documenting suspected financial exploitation are explored. The third day focuses on joint investigations and prosecution, reviewing criminal law, procedures, and handling evidence.

- **The Elderly and Self-Neglect** (under development)

Curricula for these courses, with the exception of The Elderly and Self-Neglect, are already developed and are being taught by social services practitioners. Curricula will be periodically reviewed for content and applicability.

RESPONSIBILITY OF THE LOCAL DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

The director of the local department of social services has the ultimate responsibility for ensuring that all APS workers receive and document the completion of the required minimum APS training in accordance with these standards. The supervisor or the person managing the APS program at the local level shall maintain this documentation in the worker's personnel record. A standard form will be developed and provided to local agencies to document the completion of the required courses (see Appendix E). This documentation will be available for review by the Commissioner and/or his/her representatives.

For APS workers who have not completed the minimum training requirements, the person supervising or managing the APS program at the local department of social services will provide direct supervision (a close review of all investigations and disposition decisions made during the investigation, including documenting the supervisor's review in the case record). The supervisor will assure that all APS

workers who report to him/her complete the required training within the given timeframes.

The APS social worker is responsible for the management of his/her continuing education in the field of APS. It is the responsibility of the APS social worker to discuss and plan training with the APS supervisor or the person managing the APS program at the local department and ensure that appropriate documentation is placed in his/her personnel record.

QUESTIONS ABOUT COMPLETION OF APS MINIMUM TRAINING REQUIREMENTS

Questions regarding whether an individual has appropriately completed APS minimum training requirements (e.g., whether the completion of a course can be validated) shall be made in writing from the local department's APS supervisor or person in charge of the APS program to the Adult Services Regional Program Consultant. The Adult Services Regional Program Consultant shall review the facts, make a determination, and issue a letter to the supervisor or person in charge of the APS program with their decision. The Adult Services Regional Program Consultant's decision shall be final.

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APPENDIX A.

**SENATE BILL 827 AND HOUSE BILL 1717 AND THE
AMENDMENT TO THE *CODE OF VIRGINIA*, § 63.1- 55.02,
RELATING TO ADULT PROTECTIVE SERVICES
MINIMUM TRAINING STANDARDS**

2001 SESSION OF THE VIRGINIA GENERAL ASSEMBLY

APPENDIX B.

**APS MINIMUM TRAINING STANDARDS
WORK GROUP**

APPENDIX C.

PRINTOUT OF DATA COLLECTION SCREEN

APPENDIX D.

**APS MINIMUM TRAINING STANDARDS
TRAINING ROSTER**

APPENDIX E.

**DOCUMENTATION OF THE COMPLETION OF ADULT
PROTECTIVE SERVICES
MINIMUM TRAINING REQUIREMENTS**

DOCUMENTATION OF THE COMPLETION OF ADULT PROTECTIVE SERVICES MINIMUM TRAINING REQUIREMENTS

APS Worker: _____ SSN: _____

LDSS: _____

LDSS Address: _____

FIRST-YEAR REQUIRED TRAINING *(to be completed by APS workers and supervisors within one year from the date of implementation (January 1, 2001) or within the first year of employment).*

Course Name	Exempt? (list reason)	Date Taken	Location	Instructor	Supervisor's Signature
AS/APS New Worker Policy Training (full or refresher?)					
Assessing Capacity					
APS Facility Investigations					
Substance/Medication Abuse and Elderly/ Disabled					

Was additional training recommended for the first year? ____ Yes ____ No

If yes, please list course(s) and completion date(s). _____

By signing below, I certify that I have successfully completed the first-year core courses for APS Minimum Training requirements.

Worker's Signature

Date Signed

CONTINUING APS EDUCATION REQUIREMENTS: *After the first year of implementation or employment, APS staff shall continue professional development through a **minimum of 20 hours** of professional continuing education activities annually in the fields of APS, aging, and long-term care. Education activities must be pre-approved by the local department of social services' APS supervisor or person managing the APS program. Education activities may include organized learning activities from accredited university or college academic courses, continuing education programs, workshops, seminars, and conferences.*

Year Two Education Activity	Hours	Date Taken	Location	Instructor	Supervisor's Signature

Year Three Education Activity	Hours	Date Taken	Location	Instructor	Supervisor's Signature